

# Personal Service Occupations

## Barbers, Cosmetologists, and Related Workers

(O\*NET 68002, 68005A, 68005B, 68005C, and 68008)

### Significant Points

- Job opportunities for cosmetologists should be excellent, as employers report difficulties finding qualified workers to meet the growing demand for cosmetology services.
- All barbers and cosmetologists must be licensed.
- Very high proportions of these workers are self-employed or work flexible schedules.

### Nature of the Work

Looking your best has never been easy. It requires the perfect hair-style, exquisite nails, a neatly trimmed beard, or the proper make-up to accent your coloring. More and more, it also requires the services of barbers and cosmetologists. As people increasingly demand styles that are better suited to their individual characteristics, they must choose from a vast array of cosmetic products and rely on these professionals to help them make sense of the different options. Although tastes and fashions change from year to year, the basic task of barbers and cosmetologists has remained the same—helping people to look their best.

Barbers cut, trim, shampoo, and style hair. Many people still go to a barber for a haircut, but an increasing number seek more personalized hairstyling services, such as perms or coloring. In addition to these services, barbers may fit hairpieces, provide hair and scalp treatments, shave male customers, or give facial massages. Barbers in most States are licensed to perform all the duties of cosmetologists except skin care and nail treatment, but a growing number of barbers are trained to perform these services as well.

Cosmetologists primarily shampoo, cut, and style hair, but they also perform a number of other services. These workers, who are often called hairstylists, may advise patrons on how to care for their hair, straighten or permanent wave a customer's hair, or lighten or darken hair color. In addition, most cosmetologists are trained to give manicures, pedicures, and scalp and facial treatments; provide makeup analysis for women; and clean and style wigs and hairpieces. Cosmetologists are licensed to provide all the services of barbers except shaving men.

A growing number of workers in cosmetology offer specialized services. The largest and fastest growing of these is manicurists, who work exclusively on nails and provide manicures, pedicures, and nail extensions to clients. Another group of specialists is estheticians, who cleanse and beautify the skin by giving facials, full-body treatments, head and neck massages, and offer hair-removal through waxing. Electrologists use an electrolysis machine to remove hair. Finally, shampooers specialize in shampooing and conditioning patrons' hair in some larger salons.

In addition to their work with customers, barbers and cosmetologists are expected to keep their work area clean and their hairdressing implements sanitized. They may make appointments and keep records of hair color and permanent wave formulas used by their regular patrons. A growing number also actively sell hair products and other cosmetic supplies. Barbers and cosmetologists who operate their own salons have managerial duties that include hiring, supervising, and firing workers, as well as keeping records and ordering supplies.

### Working Conditions

Barbers and cosmetologists work in clean, pleasant surroundings with good lighting and ventilation. Good health and stamina are important because these workers are on their feet for most of their shift. Prolonged exposure to some hair and nail chemicals may be hazardous and cause irritation, so special care must be taken.

Most full-time barbers and cosmetologists work 40 hours a week, but longer hours are common in this occupation, especially among self-employed workers. Work schedules may include evenings and weekends, when beauty and barber shops and salons are busiest. Although weekends and lunch periods are usually very busy, barbers and cosmetologists are able to take breaks during less popular times. Nearly half of all cosmetologists work part time or have variable schedules, double the rate for barbers and for all other workers in the economy.

### Employment

Barbers and cosmetologists held 723,000 jobs in 1998. Employment in these occupations is distributed as follows:

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists .....	605,000
Barbers .....	54,000
Manicurists .....	49,000
Shampooers .....	15,000



Barbers and cosmetologists should enjoy working with the public.

Most of these workers are employed in beauty salons, barber shops, or department stores, but they are also found in nursing and other residential care homes, drug and cosmetics stores, and photographic studios. Nearly every town has a barber shop or beauty salon, but employment in this occupation is concentrated in the most populous cities and States. Hairstylists usually work in cities and suburbs, where the greatest demand for their services exists.

Approximately 3 of every 4 barbers and 2 in 5 cosmetologists are self-employed. Many self-employed barbers and cosmetologists own the salon in which they work, but a growing share of these workers lease the booth or chair where they work from the salon's owner.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Although all States require barbers and cosmetologists to be licensed, the qualifications for a license vary. Generally, a person must have graduated from a State-licensed barber or a cosmetology school and be at least 16 years old. A few States require applicants to pass a physical examination. Some States require graduation from high school while others require as little as an eighth grade education. In a few States, completion of an apprenticeship can substitute for graduation from a school, but very few barbers or cosmetologists learn their skills in this way. Applicants for a license usually are required to pass a written test and demonstrate an ability to perform basic barbering or cosmetology services.

Some States have reciprocity agreements that allow licensed barbers and cosmetologists to practice in a different State without additional formal training. Other States do not recognize training or licenses obtained in another State; consequently, persons who wish to become a barber or a cosmetologist should review the laws of the State in which they want to work before entering a training program.

Public and private vocational schools offer daytime or evening classes in barbering and cosmetology. Full-time programs in barbering and cosmetology usually last 10 to 24 months, but training for manicurists, estheticians, and electrologists requires significantly less time. An apprenticeship program can last from 1 to 3 years. Formal training programs include classroom study, demonstrations, and practical work. Students study the basic services—haircutting, shaving, facial massaging, and hair and scalp treatments—and, under supervision, practice on customers in school “clinics.” Most schools also teach unisex hairstyling and chemical styling. Students attend lectures on the use and care of instruments, sanitation and hygiene, chemistry, basic anatomy and physiology, and recognition of certain skin ailments. Instruction also is provided in communication, sales, and general business practices. There are advanced courses for experienced barbers and cosmetologists in hairstyling, coloring, and the sale and service of hairpieces. Most schools teach hairstyling of men's as well as women's hair.

After graduating from a training program, students can take the State licensing examination. The examination consists of a written test and, in some cases, a practical test of cosmetology skills based on established performance criteria. A few States include an oral examination in which the applicant is asked to explain the procedures he or she is following while taking the practical test. In many States, cosmetology training may be credited towards a barbering license, and vice versa. A few States have even combined the two licenses into one hair styling license. In most States, a separate examination is given for people who want only a manicurist, esthetician, or electrolysis license.

For many barbers and cosmetologists, formal training and a license are only the first steps in a career that requires years of continuing education. Because hairstyles are constantly changing, barbers and cosmetologists must keep abreast of the latest fashions and beauty techniques. They do this by attending training in salons, at cosmetology schools, or at product shows. These shows offer workshops and demonstrations of the latest techniques and expose cosmetologists to a wide range of products that they can recommend to clients—an important skill as retail sales become a more important part of the salon industry.

Successful barbers or cosmetologists should have an understanding of fashion, art, and technical design. They should enjoy dealing

with the public and be willing and able to follow patrons' instructions. Communication, image, and attitude also play an important role in career success. In fact, some cosmetology schools consider “people” skills to be such an integral part of the job that they require coursework in this area. Business skills are important for those who plan to operate their own salons, and the ability to be an effective salesperson is becoming vital for nearly all barbers and cosmetologists.

During their first months on the job, new workers are given relatively simple tasks or are assigned the simpler hairstyling patterns. Once they have demonstrated their skills, they are gradually permitted to perform the more complicated tasks such as giving shaves, coloring hair, or applying a permanent. As they continue to work in the field, more training is usually required to learn the techniques used in each salon and to build on the basics learned in cosmetology school.

Advancement usually takes the form of higher earnings as barbers and cosmetologists gain experience and build a steady clientele. Some barbers and cosmetologists manage large salons or open their own after several years of experience. Others teach in barber or cosmetology schools. Other options include becoming sales representatives for cosmetics firms, opening businesses as beauty or fashion consultants, or working as examiners for State licensing boards.

### Job Outlook

Overall employment of barbers and cosmetologists is projected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2008, stemming from increasing population, incomes, and demand for cosmetology services. Job opportunities should be excellent as a growing number of employers report difficulties finding qualified applicants. In addition, numerous job openings will arise from turnover in this large occupation. Competition is expected for jobs and customers at the higher paying, prestigious salons, as applicants vie with a large pool of licensed and experienced cosmetologists. The number of self-employed, booth-renting cosmetologists should continue to grow, and opportunities will be better for those licensed to provide a broad range of cosmetology services.

Different employment trends are expected among the various specialties within this occupational grouping. Although employment of barbers is expected to decline, those entering the occupation should have good job prospects due to a large number of retirements, the return of men to barber shops, and the relatively small number of beauty school graduates opting to obtain barbering licenses. Within cosmetology, a surge in the demand for coloring services by teenagers and aging baby boomers, including men, will create many job openings for cosmetologists. Also, the rapid growth in the number of spa salons that provide a full range of services, including beauty wraps, pedicures, and massages, will generate numerous job openings for estheticians and cosmetologists trained to provide skin care services. In addition, jobs for manicurists will continue to climb.

### Earnings

Barbers and cosmetologists receive income from a variety of sources. They may receive commissions based on the price of the service or a salary based on number of hours worked. All receive tips and many receive commissions on the products they sell. In addition, some salons pay bonuses to employees who bring in new business.

Median annual earnings in 1998 for full-time cosmetologists, the largest occupation in this category, were \$15,150, excluding tips. The middle 50 percent earned between \$12,270 and \$20,540. The lowest 10 percent had earnings of less than \$11,510, while the top 10 percent earned over \$27,270. Median annual earnings, excluding tips, in the industries employing the largest number of hairdressers, hair stylists, and cosmetologists in 1997 were:

Beauty shops .....	\$15,800
Drug and proprietary stores .....	12,500
Department stores .....	11,600

Among others in this occupational grouping, median annual earnings in 1998 for those working full time were \$18,470 for barbers; \$13,490 for manicurists; and \$12,570 for shampooers. These numbers exclude tips.

A number of factors determine the total income for barbers and cosmetologists, including the size and location of the salon, the number of hours worked, customers' tipping habits, and the competition from other barber shops and salons. A cosmetologist's or barber's initiative and ability to attract and hold regular customers also are key factors in determining their earnings. Earnings for entry-level workers are usually low; however, for those who stay in the profession, earnings can be considerably higher.

Although some salons offer paid vacations and medical benefits, many self-employed and part-time workers in this occupation do not enjoy such common benefits.

### Related Occupations

Other workers whose main activity consists of improving a patron's personal appearance include beauty consultants and make-up and wig specialists. Other related workers are employed in the beauty salon industry as instructors, beauty supply distributors, and salon managers.

### Sources of Additional Information

A list of licensed training schools and licensing requirements for cosmetologists can be obtained from:

✦ National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, 901 North Stuart St., Suite 900, Arlington, VA 22203-1816. Internet: <http://www.naccas.org>

Information about a career in cosmetology is available from:

✦ National Cosmetology Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, Chicago, IL 60611. Internet: <http://www.nca-now.com>

For details on State licensing requirements and approved barber or cosmetology schools, contact the State board of barber examiners or the State board of cosmetology in your State capital.

## Flight Attendants

(O\*NET 68026)

### Significant Points

- Job duties are learned through intensive formal training after being hired.
- The opportunity for travel attracts many to this career, but the job requires working nights, weekends, and holidays and frequently being away from home.

### Nature of the Work

Major airlines are required by law to provide flight attendants for the safety of the flying public. Although the primary job of the flight attendants is to ensure that safety regulations are adhered to, they also try to make flights comfortable and enjoyable for passengers.

At least 1 hour before each flight, flight attendants are briefed by the captain, the pilot in command, on such things as emergency evacuation procedures, crew coordination, length of flights, expected weather conditions, and special passenger problems. Flight attendants make sure that first aid kits and other emergency equipment are aboard and in working order and that the passenger cabin is in order, with adequate supplies of food, beverages, and blankets. As passengers board the plane, flight attendants greet them, check their tickets, and instruct them on where to store coats and carry-on items.

Before the plane takes off, flight attendants instruct all passengers in the use of emergency equipment and check to see that seat belts are fastened, seat backs are in upright positions, and all carry-on items are properly stowed. In the air, helping passengers in the event of an emergency is the most important responsibility of a flight attendant. Safety-related actions may range from reassuring passengers during

occasional encounters with strong turbulence to directing passengers who must evacuate a plane following an emergency landing. Flight attendants also answer questions about the flight; distribute reading material, pillows, and blankets; and help small children, elderly or disabled persons, and any others needing assistance. They may administer first aid to passengers who become ill. Flight attendants generally serve beverages and other refreshments and, on many flights, heat and distribute precooked meals or snacks. After the plane has landed, flight attendants take inventory of headsets, alcoholic beverages, and moneys collected. They also report any medical problems passengers may have had, and the condition of cabin equipment.

Lead or first flight attendants, sometimes known as pursers, oversee the work of the other attendants aboard the aircraft, while performing most of the same duties.

### Working Conditions

Since airlines operate around the clock year round, flight attendants may work nights, holidays, and weekends. They usually fly 75 to 85 hours a month and, in addition generally spend about 75 to 85 hours a month on the ground preparing planes for flights, writing reports following completed flights, and waiting for planes to arrive. Because of variations in scheduling and limitations on flying time, many flight attendants have 11 or more days off each month. They may be away from their home base at least one-third of the time. During this period, the airlines provide hotel accommodations and an allowance for meal expenses.

The combination of free time and discount air fares provides flight attendants the opportunity to travel and see new places. However, the work can be strenuous and trying. Short flights require speedy service if meals are served and turbulent flights can make serving drinks and meals difficult. Flight attendants stand during much of the flight and must remain pleasant and efficient regardless of how tired they are or how demanding passengers may be. Occasionally, flight attendants must deal with disruptive passengers.

Flight attendants are susceptible to injuries because of the job demands in a moving aircraft. Back injuries and mishaps opening overhead compartments are common. In addition, medical problems can occur from irregular sleeping and eating patterns, dealing with stressful passengers, working in a pressurized environment, and breathing recycled air.

### Employment

Flight attendants held about 99,000 jobs in 1998. Commercial airlines employed the vast majority of all flight attendants, most of whom live in the major city that is the airlines' home base. A small number of flight attendants worked for large companies that operated company aircraft for business purposes.



*Flight attendants serve beverages and meals.*